In a world in which intentional ill-usage and injustice were unknown, the passions of anger and resentment would have been useless, or worse than useless. But it cannot be denied, that in the real world the resentful passions are often the means of scaring persons from the infliction of injury, when higher principle could have accomplished no such end. Full of injustice as this world is, insults and injuries would have been much more frequent, but for the instinctive passion which is ready to rise up and redress the wrong. Sinful though private feuds, duels, and the majority of wars have been, it is evident, notwithstanding, that they have been the means of checking other evils which would have spread inextricable disorder throughout society. True it is that this circumstance does not lessen the sinfulness of the evil passion, nor does it show that other and innocent and far more effectual restraints might not have been laid on these evils, than are laid by instruments which in themselves are evil; yet it proves, that while the government of God does not create either evil, it uses one evil to restrain another.

We have often been struck, in reading the narrative of the Old Testament, to find one wicked man employed to punish another. This feature of the Divine government comes out, very strikingly, in the declining age of the history of the Hebrews, and more particularly of the ten tribes. Jeroboam is employed to punish the house of David; Omri, in a later age, is raised up to punish the house of Jeroboam; while Jehu appears at an opportune time, to avenge the evil wrought by Omri and his descendant Ahab. The method is observable throughout the whole economy of God's providence, as revealed in the sacred volume. Egypt, Nineveh, Babylon, and Persia, are made the instruments of punishing the Jews, and themselves are punished for the evil which they wrought. We have at

times wondered at this, and felt as if there was something in it which seemed to reflect on the Divine government. But then, we observe the same method in operation in the world around us; and we have only to consider, that as God is no way participating in the guilt of parties who are left entirely to their own freedom, so he is no way implicated in their conduct by the use to which he turns it.

Envy itself, though among the basest and most malignant of human passions, has served certain purposes of restraint. Not that we would excuse, much less defend, this mean passion. It